

Evening Telegraph

PUBLISHED EVERY AFTERNOON (SUNDAYS EXCEPTED). AT THE EVENING TELEGRAPH BUILDING, No. 108 S. Third Street.

The Province of the Supreme Court. Our Democratic contemporaries count greatly upon the action of the Supreme Court.

"The decision made, will place Alabama by the side of Pennsylvania and New York and Maine. She will be entitled to representation in the Senate, and the absence of such representation will equally that body from trying the President on articles of impeachment."

There never was a more hollow pretense than that which is made by the Democrats of superior devotion to the Constitution.

The admission of States into the Union is purely a legislative matter, with which the Supreme Court has nothing whatever to do.

But this they will find is a mistake. If the Supreme Court were to decide that Nebraska is already a State in the Union, does anybody suppose that decision would be binding upon Congress, or that Congress would cease to be a valid body, because it should refuse to admit Senators and Representatives from Nebraska?

Mr. Jefferson did not hesitate to admit that the purchase of Louisiana was unwarranted by the Constitution, yet he justified it on the ground of public policy.

Suppose, now, that the Supreme Court should assume to decide that the acquisition of Louisiana was unconstitutional, and that the whole vast territory which was acquired at that time does not belong to the United States, would such a decision as that be worth anything? Would anybody respect it?

So, now, the status of the late Rebel States with reference to their participation in the political power of the Union is a matter belonging solely to Congress.

The Supreme Court has no more power over it than it would have in the cases we have supposed. Should it attempt to go outside of its proper field, and attempt to infringe upon the power of Congress in this matter, it would itself be guilty of usurpation, and those of its members participating in the act would be plainly liable to impeachment.

Nor even if the Supreme Court were to decide that every one of the late Rebel communities is at this moment a State in the Union, and entitled to representation, does it follow that the exclusion of Senators and Representatives from these States would invalidate Congress.

The power of reception or exclusion is sole and ultimate with Congress. The Supreme Court may say that a certain community is a State in the Union, but it can never decide that A B is entitled to a seat as Senator, or C D a Representative therefrom.

Congress may refuse their admission on a thousand different grounds, right or wrong, and there is no higher body to whom an appeal can be taken, except the people of the United States.

The idea that Congress ceases to be a valid body because it refuses to admit a certain man as member, when somebody else says he is entitled to be a member, when the Constitution makes Congress itself sole judge of that very question, is a bit of puerility quite worthy of some of our Democratic wisecracks.

The act of refusal is, at the most, but an unconstitutional act, and no more invalidates Congress itself than any other unconstitutional act would.

The Supreme Court has certain well-defined functions—a certain field in which it may act. Outside of that it cannot go without becoming guilty of usurpation.

The System of Washington "Specials." Tax Bound Table, speaking on the subject of Washington special despatches to daily newspapers, aptly remarks—

"Of course, newspapers are prepared for a fallible public, which finds half the interest of news in discussing its probability; hasty news is necessarily imperfect, and the telegraph was always a liar, but one shining source of lying rumors—one which we do not accept to call a nuisance in metropolitan newspapers—might be removed with benefit to everybody, namely, Washington correspondences per se wires."

"Some special intelligence from the capital is in a sense compulsory, and in the form of regular letters by mail, as the provincial journals receive theirs, it is deliberate and quite unobjectionable; but telegraphic specials are quite otherwise. Even if they were true, they would still be so grossly partisan as to be utterly worthless; but they are not true. At best, they are slurs at the President's policy, or 'personal,' sometimes very personal slurs; or the cheapest of predictions, or stock-jobbing rumors; or scraps of statistical information certain to get into print through other channels."

The gravest defect in the duties of this city to-day is that notoriously that give a partisan bias to their news, and the Washington despatches are nothing if not partisan. And as for the grain of truth in them, the most careless reader may remember that nearly all the rumors which have excited the country and disturbed business during the two years past have been of this sort. Richmond was taken thus times without number, and Philadelphia despatches came to be a species of by-word, for the public forgot that, by a blunder of deliberate garbling—both as to equally reprehensible—the pen of Sheridan's New Orleans despatch was left out; or how, very recently, one journal disingenuously broke faith by giving the news of the capture of Vicksburg in the form of a special despatch. The instances in which any item of news has been thus given which proved genuine, worth the cost of the telegraphing, and of such value that they have just as well have been regular news of transmission, are very few indeed; too insignificant to be weighed against the mischief of Washington despatches, and the sad fact that this department of journalism has been so general and shamelessly prostituted to partisan and personal ends."

While the manner of putting the case, as set forth by our friend, is more enthusiastic than elegant, yet we do not wonder at harsh words upon so monstrous an abuse as the system condemned. The evil is a far greater one than the public imagine, and, in addition to putting a paper under heavy expense in order to keep up with its contemporaries, places it at the mercy of correspondents, who may sell its reputation in order to enrich themselves. No first-class journal has any guarantee that it is not subjected to a falsehood when it places in its columns a despatch from Washington; for, even granting that the correspondent is as honorable as a Bayard, yet he is dependent for his items on other parties, who may deceive him, while he in good faith deceives his paper. In fact, the whole plan of little news items being sent from the capital is a mistake. Washington has an air "chameleon crammed" with rumors. Every second man you meet has some secret of state to mysteriously communicate, and not once in a hundred times is there any foundation for the so-called news. The fact that correspondents are either utterly regardless of truth, or else completely dependent on unreliable aids, is proved by the despatch about Frederick Seward's mission. He sailed on the Don and the Gettysburg; he passed out to sea and hugged closely the coast of North Carolina; he put back on the Don to Fortress Monroe, and was sighted on board the Gettysburg in the direction of the Gulf of Mexico, on his way to visit the Emperor Napoleon. Such is a consistent idea conveyed to the reader by two special Washington correspondents.

And this tissue of surmises, gossip, and stock-jobbing inventions—this network of falsehood, fancies, and personal "puffs"—is called news! To dish out to the public these delicacies of unfounded rumors, the leading journals of the country support a "Washington Bureau." The legitimate province of a newspaper is to furnish its readers with facts. Speculations may be tolerated, but the publication of falsehoods as events is beyond the energy and enterprise expected.

To cleanse this Augean stable is impossible. The whole fabric ought to be torn down. Let a few leading papers do away with their Pandora box of falsehoods, and others will follow. We are compelled to maintain the system because others do, and while recognizing the evil must submit to it. Competition may be a good thing, but return is better. Here is an undoubted evil. Let it be abated. Let regular correspondence take the place of these hasty, crude, and generally false despatches, and the public will know as much as it does, and will learn to have reliance on what it hears, and not put every item down as a falsehood until it is proved, by confirmation, to be otherwise.

MR. SCOVELL'S ADDRESS.—We publish to-day a well-written and eloquent address, delivered by Hon. James M. Scovel in Camden on the 1st instant, on "The American Idea of Liberty." It is unnecessary to say that Mr. Scovel treats his subject from the high standpoint of universal principles, applicable to all men and to all times. And such is, indeed, the true American idea of liberty. "Let it never be forgotten," said the old Continental Congress, "that the rights for which America has contended are the rights of human nature."

Mr. Scovel's speech is well worthy of personal, and as such we commend it to our readers.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE BAR.—Yesterday the dinner of the Bar to the Bench came off, at which some two hundred gentlemen sat down. The custom of tendering such hospitality is no new idea, and is commendable because of the pleasant feeling it engenders. The addresses of the Judges were all happy, particularly that of the Hon. George Sharswood, whose speech was a model of an after-dinner oration—sensible, yet anything but heavy. The responses of Mayor McMichael, Dan. Dougherty, and Hon. Eli K. Price all reflected credit on the good taste of the speakers. The dinner was voted a success.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

DR. ROLPH LEE HAS ADMINISTERED TRIPOLI WITHOUT OXIDE OF LAU... (Advertisement for a medical product)

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE. THE NEW LECTURE... (Advertisement for a lecture by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher)

ACADEMY OF MUSIC. THURSDAY, JANUARY 10. TICKETS NOW ON SALE AT TRUMPER'S MUSIC STORE, SEVENTH AND CHESTNUT STREETS. (Advertisement for a music performance)

HON. J. R. G. PITKIN, OF NEW ORLEANS, will deliver the Third Lecture of the Course under the auspices of the SOCIAL CIVILIZATION SOCIETY, on FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, at 8 o'clock, P. M., at NATIONAL HALL, MARKET STREET, above Twelfth. (Advertisement for a lecture)

ARMORY COMPANY D, FIRST REGIMENT U. S. A., January 9, 1867—Order No. 1. (Advertisement for a military unit)

NOTICE.—PUBLIC AND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANY. (Advertisement for a railroad company meeting)

THE AMERICAN UNION COMMISSION OF PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW JERSEY... (Advertisement for a union commission)

OFFICE OF THE PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANY. (Advertisement for a railroad company office)

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SPECIAL NOTICES.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. (Advertisement for a church service)

PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANY. (Advertisement for a railroad company office)

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FINANCIAL.

BANKING HOUSE OF JAY COOKE & CO. (Advertisement for a banking house)

OLD 5-20s WANTED IN EXCHANGE FOR NEW. (Advertisement for bond exchange)

SEVEN-THIRTIES. (Advertisement for bonds)

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JAY COOKE & CO. (Advertisement for a banking house)

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FINANCIAL.

7-30s, CONVERTED INTO 5-20s. (Advertisement for bond conversion)

DREXEL & CO. NATIONAL BANK OF THE REPUBLIC. (Advertisement for a bank)

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